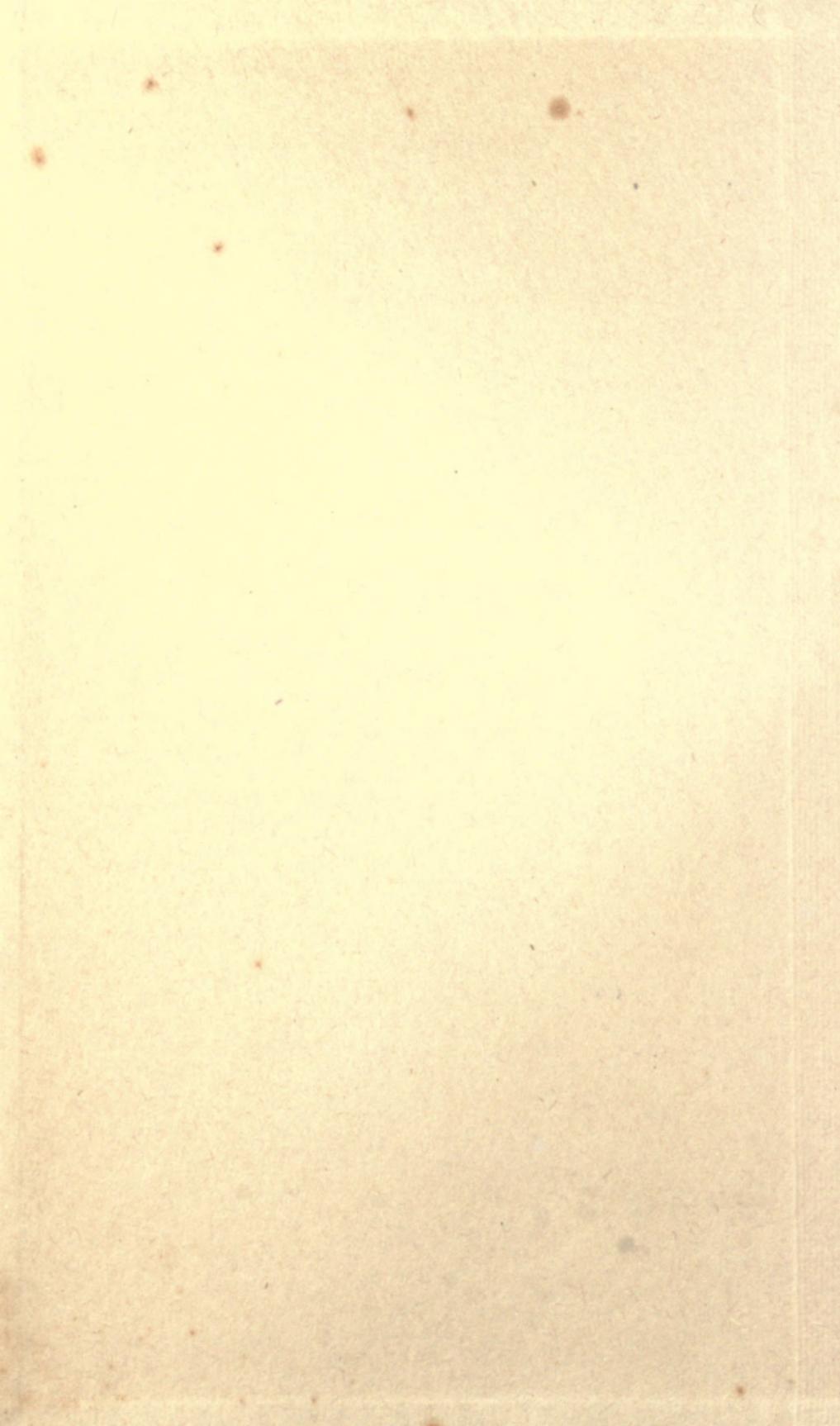
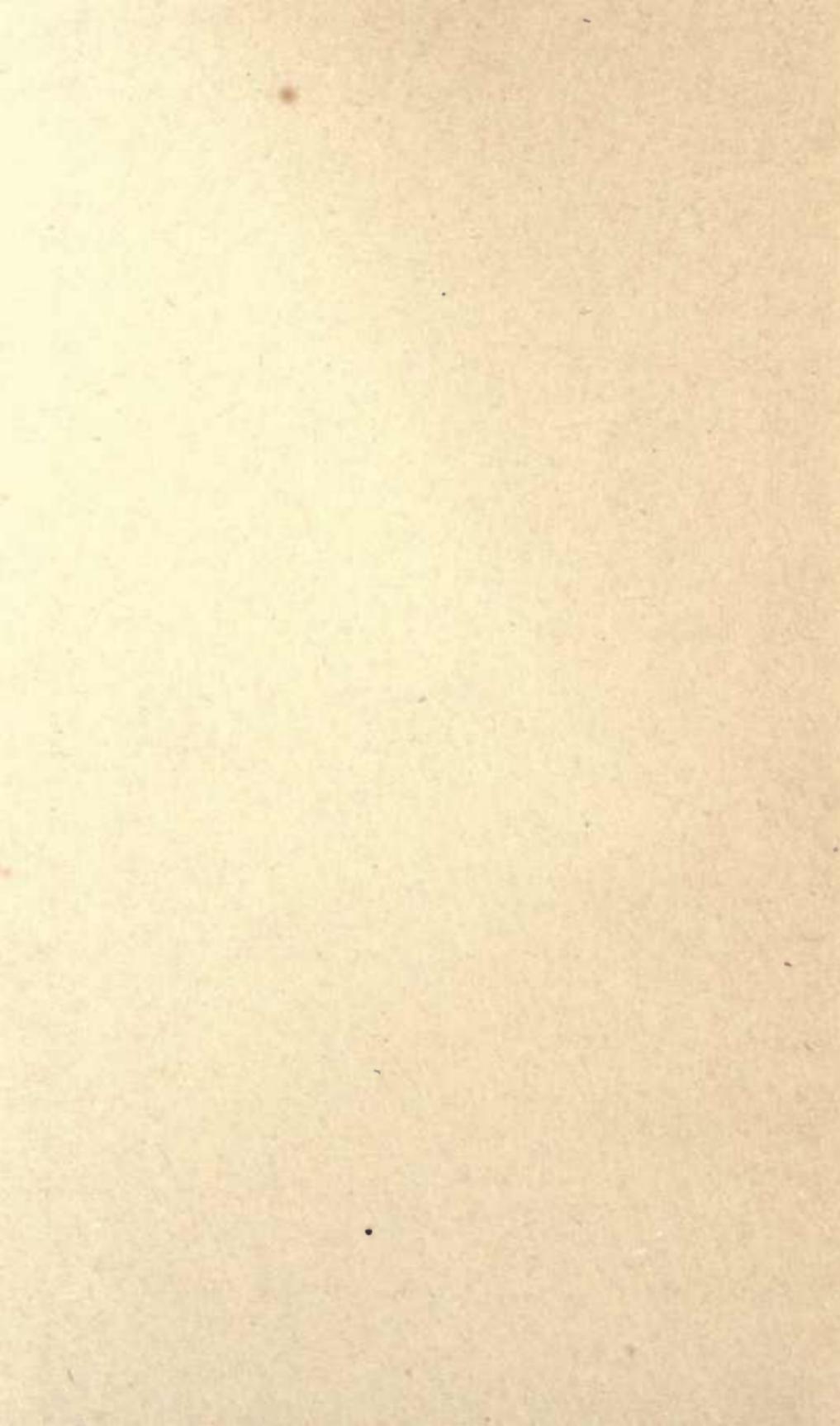


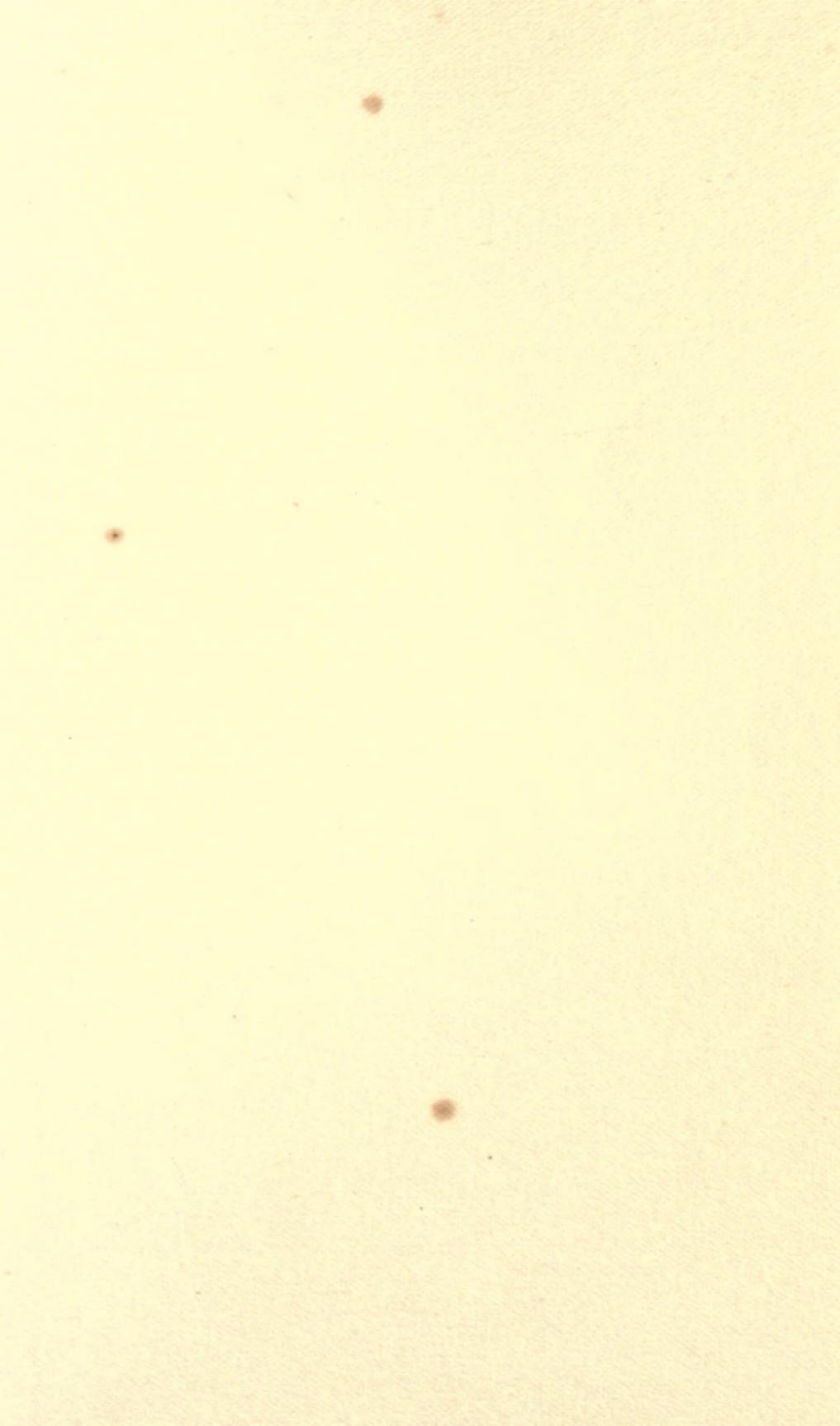
THE SONG OF THE EVENING STARS

ANNA MATHEWSON



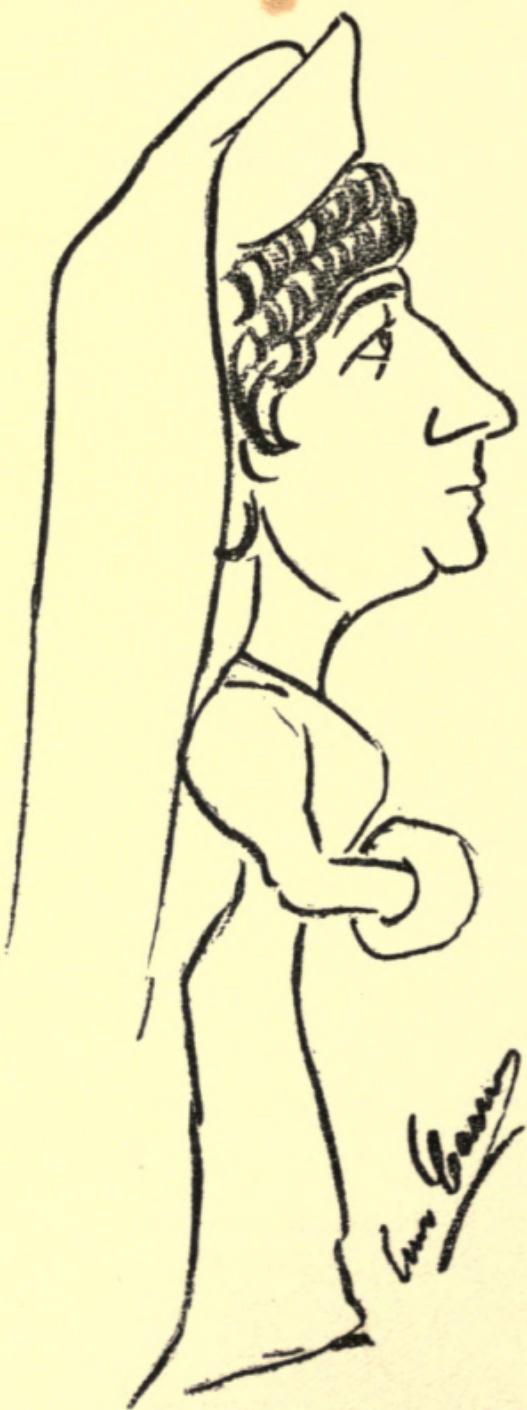


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Gadski

The Song of the EVENING STARS

BY
ANNA MATHEWSON

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ENRICO CARUSO

LONDON
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POINTS OF VIEW

The programme was *Haensel und Gretel*
With *I Pagliacci* to end;
The singers were all in fine fettle,
And everything seemed to transcend;
But the comments of people attending
Were varied as varied could be,
Were disdainful, uncertain, commending—
But, stay! let us quote two or three:

Miss Klurk of Brooklyn, in the Family Circle

Why, Mame, you here? Oh, ain't it great?
We got in half an hour late,
The subway slipped a trolley.
Say, ain't Caruso just immense?
My waist looks just like thirty cents;
It does—don't try to jolly!

Do see the di'monds on her head—
That second box—the girl in red;
She isn't very pretty.
Gee whizz! those dresses are a sight;
Why, I could look—there goes the light!
Aw, isn't that a pity?

Mr. Reinstone of Chicago, in the Dress Circle

Well, Ikey; dere is dis to say:
One wass a silly, baby play,
And very liddle funny;
De odder, dough, wass radder neat;
And den, two operas, all complete,
Is someding for de money.

*Mrs. John X. Miner of Montana, in the Orchestra
Stalls*

Yes, John; I wish these songs was sung
In somethin' 'sides a forrin' tongue;
We'd understand 'em better.
My sakes! that cunnin' *Gretel* child
A-workin' nights—it makes me riled!
They hadn't oughter let 'er.

As soon's the second part is through,
I tell you, Pa, what we can do:
(I love to watch the waiters,
An' rich folks gotter set the pace!)
Let's try that stylish Martang place
For steak an' stewed petaters.

Mrs. Banquer, in her Parterre Box

I drove my coach to-day—'twas fine!
What's that? Afraid I must decline,
 The Duchess comes to dinner.
There's Amy in the Golders' box;
Do see her brand-new auburn locks!
 Why, here comes Bob—you sinner!

My sister's wedding? That's next week;
We hardly have a chance to speak
 (My husband's snore—please wake him!)
The Count is here, of course, you know;
His relatives came too, and—oh,
 I'm glad I didn't take him!

Well, we must rush away; my aunts
Expect us at their farewell dance.

 Why, thanks; just there my coat is.
Our carriage number? Yes, that's right.
* * * * *

What opera did we have to-night?
 I didn't think to notice.

MYSTERIES OF THE MUSIC-DRAMAS

The Wagner Dramas are replete
With things one can't explain
Except as "motives" of deceit
(A thought that causes pain):
Perchance the music teems with mystery
To fit with their un-natural history.

A swan, on nothingness afloat,
Transforms into a boy;
A dove propels a man and boat
With perfect ease and joy;
The ravens fly with bat-like quiver;
And dwarfs can breathe beneath a river.

A birdling with a human voice
Gives very straight advice,
But never flies straight on by choice
When it can zigzag thrice.
How queer that rainbow, steeply arching,
Whereon stout vocalists go marching!

But worse, when wingless horses fly;
Or, puffing real hot air,
A dragon winks his emerald eye,
With megaphonic blare—
O Wagner, wondrous music-maker,
Thou wert the primal nature-faker!

THE SNOW-MAN OF THE SIERRAS

There were fire and warmth in the Bright-Yellow West,
And the score had a vigor titanic;
The principals sang with a passionate zest,
And the miners were hotly volcanic:
But the *Sheriff*, in temper and temperature,
Was an iceberg—from A unto izzard—
Whose air was so chilly it helped to procure
The terrific and audible blizzard.

When he entered the cabin that turbulent night,
Why, the “cold deck” of cards grew still colder!
The blanket-clad *Girl* was congealing with fright,
So she give him a bitter cold shoulder.
That was, maybe, why snow on his shoulder and
hat
(Which the storm had been angrily pelting),
When near a hot lamp for a long time he sat,
Failed to show any symptoms of melting.

Though the “boys” shivered long ‘neath his bleak
glassy eye
(Glacé eye, when it turned on the hero),
The frigid revenge which they took by and by
Was to freeze him out, far below zero:
For the lynching fell through that he wished to
attend—
He was frostily anxious to hold one—
But he never thawed out from beginning to end,
And the day he got left was a cold one!

SECLUSION

If ever a man has need to hide,
There is one safe place to do it—
Just one sure spot in a world so wide,
If the fugitive only knew it.

The person who dwells in a hermit's den
Is observed by the summer boarders;
The story gets into the papers then
And his anchorite plan disorders.

The sinner who sails to a tropic clime,
With a hoard of embezzled money,
Soon learns he can spend neither cash nor time
In ways that are one bit funny.

He might have remained in gay New York
Undisturbed by apprehension,
To laugh and to sing and to shout and to talk,
Yet never attract attention:

The only secluded place to stay
Exhibits itself before us,
But nobody ever looks that way—
The masculine opera chorus!



Tetrazzini

WHO?

Who sit or stand 'way up above,
Because "gran' o-pe-ra" they love
(Yet show strange evidence thereof) ?

Perhaps you guess.

Who, from the instant they are in,
Do agitate their lips and chin,
Resulting in a verbal din ?

You've heard them—yes ?

Who laugh while overtures play low,
And cause the opening chorus woe
By humming melodies they know ?

(Indeed, they do so !)

Who, when He enters, clap their fill ;
Then for a brief, brief time keep still ;
But shout, before he ends, a shrill

Bravo, Cah-ROO-so ?

Who squirm with ecstasy when he
Attacks and hits a big high D,
And then let loose their howls of glee
Forti—fortissimi ?

Who break the opera-story's thread
With wild applause at moments dread,
And oft, indeed, recall the dead ?

Italianissimi !

OPINIONS, READY-TO-AIR

She goes to grand opera one night every week,
So, certainly, she is entitled to speak
(And she does!) with much force on that topic;
She'll analyze voices and criticize themes,
Just what and just why she dislikes or esteems,
Down to points that are quite microscopic.

She knows when an opera is due to appear
(The cast in her eye and the music by ear,
Whether classic or lightly romantic);
She mentions all artists that ever have sung—
Impossible names smoothly roll from her tongue—
And their salaries, simply gigantic.

But meeting her suddenly, early to-day,
As down to her breakfast she wended her way
By the light of electrical tapers,
I cried, "Did you like the new opera last night
And all the new singers?" She stammered in fright,
"Don't know yet—I've not read the papers!"

NOT IN HARMONY

A prima donna, young and fair,
Inspired a poet's lay;
And little Cupid hurried there,
Prepared to make a stay:
He thought the singer would rejoice
To read, "Thou hast a siren's voice."

The prima donna was unlearned
In legendary lore;
She read that line, the rest she spurned
And into fragments tore;
She only knew—that fiery star—
The siren of a motor-car!

GRAND OPERA OF THE FUTURE

In the good old days of opera, we are told, the
singers could
Gain applause by merely singing, while they posed
like blocks of wood;
Not for motion or emotion did their raptured hear-
ers care,
When the notes of lucent beauty floated on the lis-
tening air.

Songsters of our generation who desire to attract
May be musical and comely, but, above all else,
must act.

Realism is demanded, situations all aflame—
Operatic melodrama soon may be its proper name.

Once sopranos, faint or dying, gently sank on
cushioned chairs,
Now they stagger, plunge and gyrate headlong
down a flight of stairs.
Tosca's jump is fraught with peril (substitutes no
more allowed);
Siegfried's full-length, backward tumble never fails
to charm the crowd;
Mélisande has a headache after *Golaud* pulls her
hair;
And *Louise's* maddened father nails her with that
kitchen-chair;
All of those who fight in duels suffer now from
stabs and shocks;
And *Brunnhilde's* bucking broncho often lands her
in a box!

So, in time, our active artists from the footlights
may be missed,
With their names enrolled forever on the casualty
list.
Then the management will furnish acrobats and
circus queens,
While the prompter runs the singing on some mus-
ical machines!

“NONE LIKE HER—NONE!”

Old Tymes remarked to Nouveau Riche:
“The singers now are few
Who waken thrills by lovely trills,
The way they used to do;
The art of song is dying fast;
The great *bel canto* days are past.”

Then Nouveau Riche replied in haste,
For wise he'd fain appear:
“Yes, yes, that's so; not one, you know,
Like those we used to hear.
She certainly deserves your praise—
None like Belle Canto, nowadays!”



Caruso

A TWO-GIFTED ARTIST

Many folks are surprised at the way
That Caruso can sketch; but they say
 The directors foresaw
 Just how well he could draw—
He can draw a full house any day!

A CONFUSION OF TONGUES

With *Tannhäuser* almost as German as beer,
It seemed, to the Teutonic herds
As they flocked in to hear it, this cry sounded queer:
"Correct libretto of th' op'ra here,
English 'n' Eyetalian words!"

HOW TO TELL PUCCINI'S MUSIC

With "Butterfly" as our example,
Like this the formula would be:
Take first, Italian style, in ample
And flowing measures, sweet and free;
Use many fragmentary phrases
But never old-time, long-drawn airs;
Now add a few Wagnerian blazes,
To elevate all listening hairs;
Spice well in Japanesy manner;
And mix in, often as you can,
A bit of bright Star-Spangled Banner—
* * * * *

(If not Puccini, it's Cohan!)

A FALSE STEP

Mrs. Malaprop, chatting of opera to us,
Made *The Pipe of Desire* her theme;
But, as usual, she twisted the name of it—thus:
“That American one, *The Pipe Dream!*”

Then she raved o'er the dance of that lithe Russian girl,
And we warmly agreed with her too,
Till at last she exclaimed (did she mean a *pas seul?*) :
“How I liked her *faux pas*; didn't you?”

A JUVENILE CRITIC

Oh, yes! I've been to op'ra twice.
To-night I think is pretty nice;
I came with darling Mother.
But if they're all of 'em like these,
I don't believe I'll ever tease
To come and see another.

I went to *Mignon* first; you know
She's just a girl that's in a show,
And—don't you think it's funny?—
When she got mad and wouldn't dance,
They never offered us a chance
Of getting back our money!

This *Gretel* is as bad as bad;
She made her mother feel so sad!
But she went round a-skipping;
She gobbled berries, too—and got
Some lovely angels, 'stead of what
She should have had—a whipping!

CLOSELY CONNECTED

The gentleman posed as a musical guide,

So he gave his opinions with force:

When asked "Who wrote *Tosca?*" he promptly re-
plied,

"It's by Toscanini, of course!"

PELLEAS ET MELISANDE

Stranger rhythm, weirder notes
Never came from singers' throats:
In the orchestra there rise
Harmonies in queer disguise:
Curious chords in dismal daze
Ramble through a magic maze:
Semblance of a fleeting tune
Lapses in a tonal swoon:
Bland, majestic, rippling, mild,
Eerie, mystic, morbid, wild—

* * * * *

What to call it? Harken well,
While the notes erratic wander:
It is music all pell-mell—
Pell-éas et Mél-isande!

SLIGHTLY MIXED

Miss Azure-Bloode remarked, "This year
The opera really is sublime;
We were immensely pleased to hear
Slezak, last night, a second time."

Said Mrs. Knewly-Ritch, "Oh dear,
How much you've missed in seasons past!
Why, I've heard Slezak every year;
It always has a splendid cast!"

A PARISIAN GARDEN

Mary, Mary,
Lithe and airy!

How does the Garden grow?
With notes like bells,
And style that tells,
And youthfulness aglow.

LOUISE AND IL TROVATORE

or,

Romance Versus Realism

Louise met *Manrico* in stageland one day,
And, waiting for no presentation,
She cried, "*Cher Monsieur*, you are very *passé*!
What use in the world is a troubadour, pray?
A quite out of date occupation!"

"*Mes yeux!* you're a sight in your doublet and
hose,
That plume on your *chapeau* looks tipsy.
A musical tramp is an imbecile pose;
You might have a home and live well, if you chose.
(*A bas* your demented old gypsy!)

"You scrimmage with swords—your idea of
romance—
A foolish and risky proceeding!
Your lady-love, meanwhile, despairingly chants
Or, sighing and sobbing, falls into a trance—
Mon Dieu, what a life you are leading!"

Manrico replied to the lively *Louise*:
"Avaunt, thou impertinent huzzy!
Arrayed in a shirt-waist, a hat like a cheese,
A stiff, ugly collar and, worse than all these,
A pompadour, ratted and fuzzy!"



Bonci



"I tell thee no audience ever could care
For seeing old women make gruel,
For polishing kettles or mending a tear,
Or fighting—with swords? Nay; an old kitchen-chair!

Such murder of Art is too cruel.

"And nobody died in thy weak little play,"
His tone grew so tragic it thrilled her.
"To poison, starvation and axe we were prey,
Completing the tale. 'Tis, methinks, the best
way—"

* * * * *

And so he impressively killed her!

WHY WE GO

Now, why do we go to the opera?

Because—

We are asked to their box by the dear Dedly-Baws;

Or because—

To go is obeying society's laws;

Or because—

It is needful to see if they wear spangled gauze;

Or because—

The gifted soprano a crowd always draws;

Or because—

'Tis exciting to join in the joyful applause;

Or because—

As critics, we're hoping to find a few flaws;

Or because—Let us pause,

And explain it by saying we go "just because."

(Yes; some go because they love opera.)

A BAD BEGINNING

The early bird always gets something unpleasant
(His breakfast, we're told, is quite likely to squirm),

And early attendants on opera at present
The truth of the opening statement confirm.

You've studied the program and read the libretto;
The overture starts like a soft summer breeze;
Then, pierced by a voice like the sharpest stiletto,
You rise in response to a

“Let us pass, please.”

Patrons to left of you, matrons to right of you
(Passage in front and your seat on an aisle)—
Mussing your clothes and your hair, make a fright
of you,

Pushing their way with a scowl or a smile.

The overture's finished, for up goes the curtain
(As seen o'er the heads of the incoming throng);
You snatch a brief glimpse of the stage, but it's certain

That little you'll hear of the opening song.
“Celeste Aida—” Oh, can't they keep quiet?

(The tenor who sings is the greatest of great.)
But the racket goes on like a Donnybrook riot—

Why, why should you suffer because they come late?

“Celeste Ah-ee—”

“You have taken my seat, madam.”

“Haven’t!”

“You have!”

“Put him out, usher, please!”

“Third to the left, sir.”

“You’re right on my feet, madam.”

“There goes my hat!”

“Hush, hush, hush!”

“Did you sneeze?”

Early birds certainly do get the worst of it:

Still, as result of their agonized words,

Changes may come so they’ll yet hear the first of it—

Then there’ll be warbling from these surly birds!

A GOOD ENDING

The opera was concluding with a weird poetic thrill,
The audience—intent, entranced—sat absolutely still;
No sound to break illusion, save the falling of a tear.
“Is this New York?” I marvelled, “And, if so,
what is the year?”
For memory flashed a search-light, and with horror
I could see
A panoramic vision of the way it used to be:

Twenty minutes before the end,
Suburb-dwellers their way would wend;
Jerseyites were the first to stamp
Over our toes with ruthless tramp;
Fifteen minutes—Long Islanders went,
Falling down steps in their mad descent;
Ten minutes—Harlemites having mishaps,
Losing their overshoes, purses and wraps;
Five—Brooklyn Bridgers were off with a rush,
While a minority feebly said, “Hush!”
Two—all the boxes were empty by now,
So, when the singers came forward to bow,
Out of the thousands now scattered abroad
Thirty-three people had stayed to applaud.

“That mobbish time is past,” I thought. “How
blissful this does seem!
We’re civilized—” But here I woke from that too-
perfect dream.

EXTREME MEASURES

See; with musical emotion brimming o'er—
The tenor's eyes;
List; with lyrical devotion do they soar—
The tenor's sighs;
All entranced we hear them float
From a highly valued throat;
And we also sometimes note
The tenor's size.

Towering toward the scenic heaven, seven feet
four—
Slezak the Great;
While reversed to four feet seven—little more—
Is Bonci's state.
Art is measured not by feet,
But if these extremes should meet
On the stage—why, here's a treat
For which we wait!



Farrar



THE COACHMAN AND DIE WALKURE

Say, Bill; I been to see the play
They call "Gran' Op'ra Matinee;"
 'Tis dagoes, mostly run it.
We drive the Madam there each week,
An' I been figurin' to sneak
 Inside; an' so I done it.

"Here, Tom;" says I, "drive round the block
Whilst I go in." He didn't knock,
 But took the lines all aisy.
It cost a dollar, jus' to stand;
An' though there was a fine big band,
 The chunes they played was crazy.

Die—Somethin' was the name; an' sure
So dead a show I'd not endure,
 An' hope to keep on livin':
The secon' act had jus' begun—
Now, if the rest was like that one,
 Them dagoes need forgivin'!

First was a man wid jus' one eye
(His looks would make a filly shy!)—
 Yes; 'tis the trut' I'm tellin'.
A girl was standin' overhead;
"Ho, ho, hi, ho," was all she said—
 Ye *never* heard such yellin'!

I couldn't laugh at suchlike stuff;
But when I'd had about enough,
Another girl's arrivin':
Well, man; that show was purty cheap—
She drove a team of faked-up sheep
An' had *no* style in drivin'!

The usher says, "Ye'd better bide;
On flyin' horses soon they'll ride."
I wonder did he mean it?
Belike 'tis some new foreign way;
I'm sorry, now, I didn't stay,
Indeed, I oughter seen it.

Though 'taint believable, of course,
To harness wings upon a horse,
It's bothered me all mornin'.
If Madam gets that in her mind—
An airplane-an'-horse combined,
Ye'll hear me givin' warnin'!

WHAT SHE MISSED

The lady was superbly gowned,
Her hat was in accord;
Through gold lorgnette she smiled or frowned;
Her a's were very broad;
She wore a plutocratic name,—
In short, a most imposing dame.

Of *Parsifal* I chanced to talk;
She waved my words aside,—
“I cahn’t endure it in New Yawk;
I greatly miss,” she cried,
“The atmosphere, that all allow
It has in Ober-Ammergau!”

IN AND OUT

He took her to the opera-house to hear a matinee;
And wishing to impress her (for a wealthy maid
is she),

He got the most expensive seats, he bought a big
bouquet,

Then (he is impecunious), but fifty cents had he.
However, luckily for him, she lived up Harlem
way,
So, therefore, they would take the Sub. and have
no cab to pay.

She gave him, when they started out, a violet-
scented note,

And as they hurried to the train he mailed it in
a box.

He talked with grandeur while they rode; he told
an anecdote,

Quite casually, about his large investments in
good stocks;

He mentioned family estates, without a trace of
guile,

The charming girl attending with a most receptive
smile.

They entered when orchestral airs had just com-
menced to float,

But joy is brief! that festive youth received some
sudden shocks;

He could not gain admittance with a violet-scented
note—

His envelope of tickets? In the Harlem letter-
box!

No sequel hangs upon these lines, they end as they
begin:

He took her to the opera-house—he did not take
her in!

GOOSERY

This damsel—fashioned like a lithesome eel,
With humpy puffs upon her bandaged head,
And skirts bound tightly just above her heel
To mark the mincing tread
Displayed between the acts when, with a smile,
She waggles up and down the lengthy aisle—
For *Königskinder* does she care a crumb?
Nay, nay; for conversation she has come.

Although the winsome *Goose-girl* tends her pets,
Although the lovely notes arise and sink,
This giggling, gaggling damsel's voice upsets
The art of Humperdinck;
Until we wish, in helpless, seething rage,
That geese were not allowed, save on the stage,
Or, since her manners are so much amiss,
The well-trained flock might look her way and
hiss!

OH YES!

*"Oh no! we never mention him,
His name is never heard"*

Old Song

The operatic legion
Has a singer from Algiers,
And the listeners are delighted
Every time that he appears;
But, attempting to commend him,
They discover with dismay
That he has a name unusual,
Which they dare not try to say—
They feel embarrassed, even silly,
When tackling “D-i-n-h Gilly.”

We resolved to praise his singing,
His enunciation fine,
And his profile, a la Dante,
Or his feet of shapely line;
So we sought for information
From a Personage-Who-Knows,
On whose French-Algerian knowledge
We could tranquilly repose—
We grasped the syllables so eely,
And now serenely say “Daahn Zheely!”



Toscanini

THE UNASPIRATING USHER

The usher is a mystic combination:

At times, despotic as a Czar of Russia,
On ladies' hats he shows determination

To (verbally) sit down and be a crusher;
But never checks disturbing conversation

Among the type described as "giddy gusher;"
'Tis then we wish he felt an aspiration

To add an **aspirate**, and be a husher!

ARTURO TOSCANINI

He leads, without a sign of score,
The *Götterdammerung*;
And brings out beauties heretofore
Unknown, unheard, unsung,
From blitheful songs to lyric sermons—
He beats the Dutch—that is, the Germans!

CLEOFONTE CAMPANINI

Campanini—what is he?

Surely not a mortal man;
Busy bees could blush to see

How he works: what is his plan?

Answer: Well, we have a notion
That he is—Perpetual Motion.



LIME-LIGHT LIMERICKS

A WORD OF WARNING

“These Limericks” (perchance you’ll say,
Dear reader, in your haste)
“Should not have been arranged this way,
In order so misplaced!”
But pause, before you grow frenetic,
And note, the plan is alphabetic.

BELLA ALTEN

Of ALTEN, so childlike and gay,
"Alten Bella" we never shall say;
For she'll always be young,
From her toes to her tongue,
In a mettlesome *Gretelsome* way!

ALESSANDRO
BONCI

Bonny BONCI (a vocal first-rater
Who was recognized sooner than later)
Comes short, in one sense,
But his voice is—"immense,"
For its beauty grows greater and greater.

His style, in a way, is colossal ;
His tones are as true as a throstle,
Which, though not a large bird,
Always makes itself heard ;
In short, he's *bel canto's* apostle.



Campanini

ENRICO CARUSO

Who sails the high C's like CARUSO?
That musical Robinson Crusoe,
 Remote and alone
 In a class of his own,
Since no other tenor can do so.

To proverbs we oft are beholden;
"Silver speech" was a favorite olden,
 But no longer true so
 Concerning CARUSO,
Whose voice, not his silence, is golden.

LINA
CAVALIERI

If LINA should ever be leaner,
Our eyesight would have to grow keener;
She is beautiful—yes;
But if “beautifully less,”
We might not be sure we had seen her.

EMMY
DESTINN

Her singing wins deep admiration;
Her acting, an equal ovation.

DESTINN—come, year by year,
Till this land shall appear
To be, some day, your sole Destin-nation!

HECTOR CHARLES ADAMO
DUFRANNE DALMORES DIDUR

DUFRANNE rises far from the level;
And in DALMORES' art all must revel;
While of DIDUR they say
(In a flattering way),
As *Mephisto* he acts like the devil!



Didur

MARY GARDEN

The GARDEN in beauty upspringing,
Whose name through the world now is ringing,
Shows a consummate art
In creating a part;
But is fonder of speaking than singing.

LOUISE
HOMER

A Homer was loved by the Greeks
(Same 'Omer of whom Kipling speaks) :
With Persians a claim
Has Omar to fame;
And for Homer the eagle now shrieks.

This HOMER, sweet HOMER of ours
Mid contraltos a great "Singer" towers;
For she looms up apart
In her musical art
And highly dramatical powers.

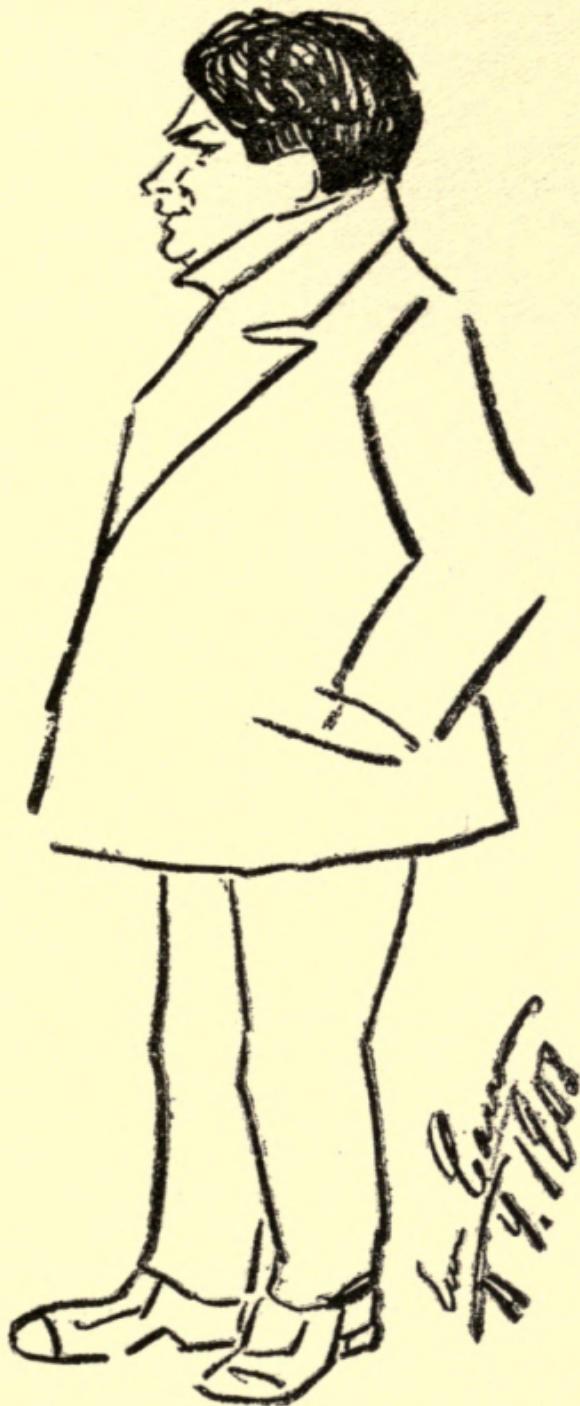
RICCARDO
MARTIN

MARTIN'S exquisite voice is exact;
His appearance is apt to attract;
 And, of course, growing older,
His genius won't smolder
But burst into blaze, so he'll act.

This son of "Kaintuck" has been plucky
(Which is very much better than lucky);
 We suppose he's from Breathitt
Because, sure as death, it
Sounds right for a voice from Kentucky!

NELLIE MELBA

The title that seems to belong
To MELBA is Empress of Song:
 Her voice—high or low,
 Or where else it may go,
Has never been heard to go wrong.



Martin

LILLIAN
NORDICA

When NORDICA goes from the stage
Her adorers their grief may assuage,
For—the plan is adroit—
In her Yankee Baireuth
She can still tread the boards for an age.

MAURICE RENAUD

RENAUD is an artist who'll paint
Any portrait—romantic or quaint;
If he tried to do so
He could be the whole show,
With a range up from sinner to saint.



Scotti

MARIO PASQUALE ANTONIO
SAMMARCO AMATO SCOTTI

SAMMARCO, AMATO and SCOTTI:

Enough to drive any one dotty—

Three baritone graces,

All fit for first places!

(Let's dodge a description so knotty.)

LUISA
TETRAZZINI

TETRAZZINI the world has astounded,
Wherever her high notes have sounded:
 Her feet and her smile
 All her hearers beguile,
Even while they confess she's—well—rounded!



Sammarco

REMINISCENT RHYMES

Unless you love the "good old times"
(From two to ten years back they're dated),
Skip past these Reminiscent Rhymes,
Which, more or less, are antiquated;
Not prizeable antiques—but yet
They claim a place, "lest we forget."

OSCAR HAMMERSTEIN

O-nly natural, perhaps, for him to like sensations,
H-is initials, even, take the form of exclamations—

OH!

HO!!

THE HAT THAT NEVER COMES OFF

Upon the brow of Hammerstein
(Where laurels, too, are twining)
By day, by night, a hat doth shine,
Whose wearer can no time assign
To slumbering or dining.

No wonder that it brightly beams:
Beneath it he is mapping
A swirl of brilliant, novel schemes,
And thoughts like incandescent gleams
Electrical are snapping.

Since man and hat achieve their aim
Of never being sat on,
Why not perpetuate their fame
And, more appropriately, name
That opera-house—Man-hat-on?



W. Hammerstein
Oscar Hammerstein

Oscar Hammerstein

TO MARCELLA SEMBRICH

Blithe sovereign: reigning alone
In a kingdom completely your own,
When you took off the crown
And the scepter laid down—
What a queen of all hearts left the throne!

EXIT EMMA EAMES

Among the most lustrous of names
Shone that of our elegant Eames;
Though some said, "How droll!
She enacts every rôle
With the pomp of Colonial Dames."

AS TO SALOME

While controversial breezes blow
From every point of compass,
And streams of fresh opinion grow
To seas of rage and rumpus—
Thus advertised, her worth enhancing,
Salome, everywhere, is dancing.

But leaving out each pro and con
(Con-tempt or pro-testations),
A fact remains that bears upon
The gayety of nations,—
The dictionary's name division
Presents *Salome's* definition.

One would suppose the name might mean
A something weird (or Wilde),
Adapted to an Eastern scene
The opposite of mild;
But, though of frenzy and decease full.
Salome is defined as "peaceful"!

THE CONDUCT OF A CONDUCTOR

The Hertz that once in opera's halls
An orchestra misled—
Whose violins raised caterwauls
And horns could raise the dead—
Allowed no singer of those days
Above the din to soar
Unless they chose to chant their lays
With yell and shriek and roar.

But, all at once, the scene grew bright!
No more the racket swells;
We hear distinctly and aright
The tale the music tells.
The leader now has changed his aim;
Sweet harmonies abound,
Since Mahler, "like a poultice, came,
To heal the blows of sound."



Gatti-Casazza



GATTI-CASAZZA AND DIPPEL

To join the Ananias Club
Old proverbs have begun:
 An adage of our early youth
 No longer seems to tell the truth—
Two Heads were worse than one!

FRENZIED FIGURES

Vaunt not the Uncle Thomas show
With twin-like Topsies, gaily prancing;
Or three-ringed circus, where we go
To cross our eyes with sights entrancing;
For Grandest Opera came in view
With 2 Directors—Count Them—2!

2 Choruses—oh, count them, too!
Italian one; the other, German;
Race riots will, perhaps, ensue
Or war (as once defined by Sherman);
Their color line's not white and jet,
But Teuton—Latin, blonde—brunette.

2 Orchestras—oh, yes, indeed!
And 4 Conductors now assemble:
But what may furthermore succeed?
A premonition makes us tremble—
Suppose, SUPPOSE the future brings
3 Simultaneous Nibelung Rings!!!

IRENE'S INFATUATION

Irene became a Wagnerite
At quite a recent day;
And when her fads begin their flight,
She follows all the way;
Just now she thinks the earth was made
So *Parsifal* could be displayed.

Irene reads volumes, by the score,
That bear upon this theme;
She skims through magazines galore
For *Parsifallian* cream;
The papers, too, though not for news,
But pro and Con-ried interviews.

Irene hears lectures, every kind—
With choir-boys, with scenes,
With moving pictures or combined
With musical machines:
Consuming, hastily, the cult,
Will mind-dyspepsia not result?

Irene is learning, not by note,
That weird and wondrous score.
Sub rosa-ly, her family vote
The opera is a bore;
And if announced for five more times,
They'll take a trip to distant climes.

Irene's adorers look askance,
And more remote they stand;
Except one youth, who sees the chance
To win his lady's hand:—
She'll not refuse (he is adroit!)
A wedding journey to Baireuth.

PAINFUL POSSIBILITIES

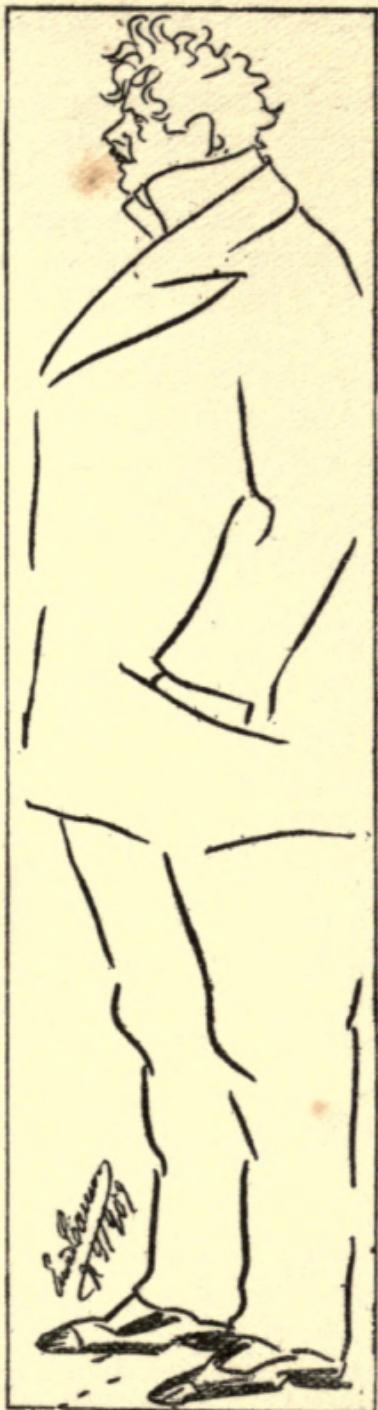
Before the golden stars that now
 Illume Grand Opera's sky
In reverence we humbly bow,
 Their fame we magnify,
 And (if we can pronounce the same),
 We speak, with bated breath, each name.

But should our reverence fail apace,
 That man will be to blame
Who in the advertising space
 Inserts each stellar name—
 It fills adoring minds with dread
 To find De Reszke billed as "Ed."

Though printer's imps they may have been
 Who made the error grave,
Within the list we've lately seen
 The Bispham nicknamed "Dave!"
 (And if you can't believe these rhymes,
 You'll find it in a Tuesday Times.)

So, if we have "Lou" Homer next,
 It would not much surprise;
"Lil" Nordica might well be vexed,
 If such should meet her eyes;
 "Jo" Gadski could not make a hit,
 Though "Tony" Scotti seems to fit!

O advertiser! prithee pause:
 Give "Edouard" all his meed
(Though hard it is to spell), because
 In time this thing may lead
 To "Tiny" Heink and—shame of shames—
 A culmination of "Em" Eames!



Slezak

APROPOS OF TWO SOPRANOS

Fair Fremstad and Farrar comparing
Would be a task, useless and daring;
So let it be said
That each beautiful head
Its own style of laurel is wearing.

GERALDINE FARRAR

Farrar's a flower:

Freshly blooms her girlish *Marguerite*;
A wayside daisy's timid grace,
With nature's sunlight in its face,
So simple and so sweet.

Farrar's a flower:

Mimi seems a broken *fleur-de-lis*;
Nedda, a scarlet poppy, glows;
Juliet, a velvet damask rose,
Unfolds at love's decree.

Farrar's a flower:

Wistaria, the fragrant counterpart
Of iridescent *Butterfly*;
As fragile as a passing sigh,
But twining round the heart.

OLIVE FREMSTAD

Fremstad—a flame
On an altar of Art:
No praise nor blame
Has marred the aim
To soar, apart.

A marvellous glow
Of variant rays;
From joy to woe
Great passions flow
In radiant blaze.

O magic fire
Still upward dart!
O voice—like a lyre
From the heavenly choir—
Mount higher, yet higher
On the altar of Art!

A POSTSCRIPT TO YOU

Kind Reader (or, I hope, Dear Friend):
If, haply, you survive
To travel with me to the end
And at this page arrive,
I now apologize in haste
For all that differed from your taste.

We see, of course, with varied eyes,
And when we write in jest,
There's very apt to be surprise
At what we have expressed;
But if you print a book some day,
I vow to echo all you say!







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